

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented) A system for limiting outward movement of a slide-out shelf, wherein the shelf includes at least one projecting forward stop tab and at least one rear tab, said system comprising:

a plurality of side supports configured to support the shelf, each said side support comprising a ledge comprising:

a rear portion having a first width sufficient to retain the rear tab;

a forward portion having a second width less than said first width and sufficient to retain the forward stop tab, each of said rear portion and said forward portion including a top surface and an opposing bottom surface, wherein said forward portion is configured to provide a clearance for the rear tab and to further provide a clearance portion having a third width less than said second width, said clearance portion defining an opening extending through said top surface and said bottom surface, wherein said clearance portion is configured to provide a clearance for receiving the forward stop tab;

a plurality of support members configured to rigidly connect said side supports and contact at least a portion of the shelf thereby blocking forward movement of the shelf;

a plurality of gussets extending inwardly from each of said side supports; and

a gusset tab extending upwardly from each of said gussets and aligned substantially vertically below said clearance portion, said gusset tab configured to contact the stop tab of the shelf thereby blocking further forward movement of the shelf.

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said portion of the shelf comprises at least one of a forward stop tab and a rear tab, whereby said tabs are at least one of integral and unitary.

4. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 3 wherein said rear tabs extend longitudinally.

5. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 3 wherein said forward stop tabs extend laterally outward from said shelf.

6. (previously presented) A system in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said gussets and said gusset tabs are integral, said gussets extend laterally inward from said side supports.

7. – 8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) A method for assembling a shelf assembly including a shelf and at least one side support, said method comprises:

positioning at least one projecting forward tab and at least one rear tab extending outwardly from the shelf;

positioning at least one side support including a laterally projecting ledge including a rear portion having a first width sufficient to retain the at least one rear tab and a forward portion having a second width less than the first width, each of the rear portion and the forward portion including a top surface and an opposing bottom surface, wherein the forward portion provides a clearance for the at least one rear tab;

positioning a clearance portion in the forward portion having a third width less than the second width, the clearance portion defining an opening extending through the top surface and the bottom surface, wherein the clearance portion provides a clearance for receiving the at least one forward tab;

positioning at least one gusset extending inwardly from each of the side supports, wherein the at least one gusset includes a gusset tab extending upwardly from the gusset;

aligning the gusset tab substantially vertically below a corresponding side support clearance;

positioning at least one support member configured to rigidly connect the side supports and configured to contact the forward tab when the shelf is in a first extended position;

supporting the shelf on the side supports; and

slidably coupling the shelf to the side supports.

10. (original) A method in accordance with claim 9 wherein slidably coupling the shelf to the side supports further comprises coupling the shelf to the side supports such that the shelf extends outward in a first direction and retracts inward in a second direction opposite the first direction.

11. (original) A method in accordance with claim 10 wherein slidably coupling the shelf to the side supports further comprises extending the shelf outward till the forward tabs contact the gussets and at least one support member such that additional outward linear movement is prevented.

12. (currently amended) A slide-out shelf assembly comprising:

a shelf comprising a first side, a forward tab laterally extending a first distance from said first side, and a rear tab laterally extending a second distance from said first side, said second distance less than said first distance; and

a first shelf side support comprising a laterally projecting ledge for sliding engagement with said shelf first side, said side support further comprises a plurality of support members rigidly connecting said first shelf side support to a second shelf side support and configured to contact said forward tab when said shelf is in a first extended position, said projecting ledge comprising:

a rear portion having a first width sufficient to retain said rear tab; and

a forward portion having a second width less than said first width and providing a first clearance for said rear tab and further providing a second clearance for said forward tab, said second clearance having a third width ~~providing a clearance for to facilitate releasing~~ said forward tab from said ledge.

13. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said second width is sized to retain said forward tab when said forward tab is positioned in said forward portion.

14. (previously presented) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said forward and rear tab extend laterally outward from said shelf first side, and said first side support ledge extends laterally inward over said forward and rear tab when said shelf is in a retracted position.

15. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said shelf forward tab is configured to be forward of said ledge rear portion and under said ledge forward portion when said shelf is in a fully extended position.

16. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said rear tab is configured to be under said ledge rear portion when said shelf is in said fully extended position.

17. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 15 wherein said shelf forward tab is configured to be forward of said ledge rear portion and under said ledge forward clearance portion when said shelf is in a release position.

18. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said rear tab is configured to be forward said ledge rear portion when said shelf is in said release position.

19. (canceled)

20. (previously presented) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12, wherein said support member is configured to prevent said forward tab from moving forwardly from said first extended position until a forward edge of said shelf is raised.

21. (original) A shelf assembly in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said shelf comprises a refrigerator shelf.